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First mention of the queens

A year later, in 2012, their debut album *Champagne Holocaust* was mastered, and the band organised a series of chaotic release parties, with the final one at their new favourite hangout in Brixton, the Queen's Head. Saul had met the Landlord on the tail-end of a bender, and believed he was the rudest man he had ever come across. He wore a T-shirt with 'London, My Arse' on the front, Alan Vega shades and a Baker Boy hat, which made him a complete tosser in Saul's eyes. Saul played drums at a gig in the function room with Curly Joe on guitar on the night of the London riots. The entire pub was locked up as petrol bombs and screaming erupted outside. Saul and the Landlord shouted encouragement at the rioters from the upstairs balcony, a sport

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that they quickly bonded over. By the time morning came, Saul and Nathan agreed he was possibly the only person in Brixton who could put up with their revolting behaviour and a firm friendship was formed. The Landlord convinced them to hold a party for their album in his venue, which he gave them for free, providing they could fill it.

It was decided by committee that the Fat Whites would play their last ever show as a band, considering how much of an ordeal they had already gone through trying to live with each other and record the album, which nobody would be remotely interested in hearing anyway. There was little interest beyond Brixton, and any chance of success or a pop career was rendered obsolete by their provocative and frequently offensive actions onstage and lyrical content. The band was only ever meant to be a way for them to earn money to buy more drugs and avoid getting a proper job. Lias, Nathan and Saul made the decision to break up the band and leave for Barcelona, which had taken on a utopian quality since their brief visit a few years prior.

After a final debauched party at Sturdy, Fat White Family uploaded their album online, packed up their belongings, and made their way to Victoria to catch the coach to Paris. The house was completely ruined, but with a small envelope of cash in their back pockets, they waved goodbye to Peckham to pursue a future in the clear Catalan sunshine.

It was agreed that they would move back to Brixton to live at the Queen's with the Landlord, who had spare rooms above the pub. The band would rehearse in the function room there; in return for the roof over their heads, they would play regular gigs and Lias would knead dough and become the in-house pizza chef. Anything had to be an improvement on the Sturdy Road abyss, and in the Landlord they had found a new 'team coach' who was ready to lead them further into the seven rings of hell.

The bodies of the broken men climbing in and out of the Queen's every evening looked a lot like the war on disappointment they'd been attempting to drink their way through: overextended and overwrought. Each face was like an eternally slapped arse, like a molested patch of rhubarb. Suspended above their crummy little cocaine mandalas their eyes would lock and something resembling conversation would unfurl, but it was as two mirrors placed on opposing walls – immaculate vacuity. The loudest voices were the only ones that mattered. Those willing to show and tell.

The two-hundred-year-old brickwork hummed with impotent confessions. It also hummed with song. There was no such thing as humiliation. That belonged to a previous life. Some of the younger punters might be gone the next day, gone forever with a tale or two to tell, back to something tenable, something they might be able to endure. The regulars corralled here though were dedicated to the nightly onset of drought. What began with a green shoot always left them in the same desert of howling impossibilities. These men would make up our surrogate family, our assurances as to a future shorn of all responsibility. And we would be their champions, their brand ambassadors. We would export their defiant decrepitude to the world . . .

The walls of the pub on Stockwell Road were built in 1786 a a staging house on the road into London; there was a historica resonance to the place, through which thousands of travellin men had passed for two hundred years, on their way to seek th city's fortunes.

The exterior of the Queen's was painted black, the boarded-u windows were painted black, and the walls inside were als painted black. A fading old Victorian boozer, the disreputabl establishment was populated by barflies and desperados, man ravaged by alcoholism and drugs, often in their older years, sti clinging to the myth of the men they once were before dementi eventually bedded in.

The suppurating attitude and gnarly character of the Queen gave the band an extra layer of skin against the world; it created sense of resilience in them. Its poison converted into playfulnes there was functionality in its chaos, and a sense of belongin Music was the only thing that was taken seriously. In thei dysfunctionality they created a new family within its walls, on that allowed for the trickiest behaviour and vilest aspects of eac member's personality, and somehow in this heart of darkness the all found solace in that.

The week of their return, the Landlord had decided to host a exhibition of a local artist who specialised in creating photograph of rectal hand insertion, and on each large-screen TV images c hairy fists being shoved into black holes cascaded throughout th day in the same room where families ate Sunday roasts. In th main bar, the resident 'drunkle' – once a famous Ibiza DJ bac in the day – salivated at the food being served and wandere between each table begging for money so he too could eat £5 roast. He was so wrecked he had taken to living in the pub reminiscing each hour on his previous life of mass adoration an repetitive beats.

The Queen's was Brixton's very own Last Chance Saloon, a establishment that welcomed those cast out by others, one tha

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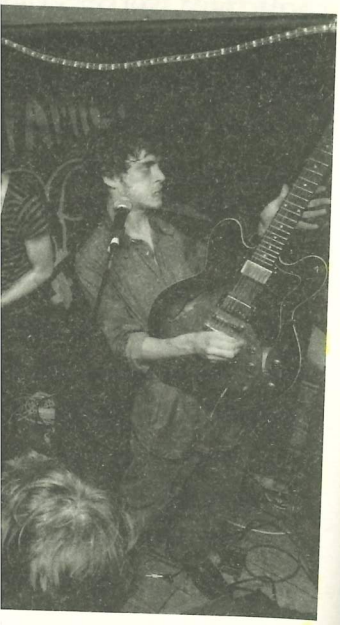
encouraged bad behaviour, lunacy and extreme states. One New Year's party was so packed that a punter stuck outside attacked the venue's door with a burning Christmas tree. Nevertheless, the Landlord was tolerant of the terrible mess his young tenants got into, even forgiving Curly Joe, who pissed all over his bed one night, blind drunk and higher than the sun, and was let back in the bar at opening time, no questions asked.

Recognising Saul's musical ear, the Landlord gave him a job booking acts for the pub in exchange for a room upstairs. Prior to Barcelona, Saul had lived in Hank Dog's cupboard in a council house in Clapham, which he paid £70 a month for. But even that was luxury compared to what he was offered at the Queen's. His new abode was the broom cupboard, which had a sloping floor, so that even with his mattress he slept on an angle, sliding off and downwards into the night. Like the other rooms at the Queen's, it was infested with bedbugs, and they quickly took hold of his bedding, crawling through each layer of fabric as he attempted to sleep. As the bedbugs had no interest in the Landlord's blood, he didn't bother to fumigate the place, but the fat cochineal insects were delighted with their new hosts, who clearly tasted far better than he did. Each evening, Saul tucked his long johns into his socks, tightened his hooded top against his face, and buried his hands inside his jumper, so all that remained were his large eyes peering out. But even that had little effect, and when he rose each morning the small area of exposed skin on his face would be covered in bites and blood and little scabs, forming a patterned mass of feasting on his eyelids, chin, nose and mouth.

Heroin was an easy way to escape the torment, but the noise that emanated from downstairs, sometimes until 4 a.m., frequently pounded his brain. The Landlord held Bashment nights in the bar, as lock-ins or wedding events for his friends, the *boom boom boom* of dancehall rhythms being enough to send Saul into a spiral of doom. His opiated sleep was frequently interrupted when his host kicked his door open at 3 a.m., pulled the sheets from his tenant, and shouted at him to 'Get the fuck out of bed, I need the glasses washing.' Saul would have to run downstairs, rub the bleeding mess from his face, and start washing the hundred glasses that had piled up on the bar.

Upstairs, in the function room, the band rehearsed new songs. In the kitchen downstairs Lias made Hang Cameron calzones, smoking spliffs and throwing rodent corpses into the bin before each shift began. The menu at 'Grande Finocchio's Stonebaked Pizza' was adorned with a photograph of Lias in his underpants,



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Lias in his underpants,

wearing a worker's cap and swinging a large salami suggestively by its string:

> For Grande, pizza is more than something you put inside your body, it IS the body. For over nineteen years, the maverick Italian chef has been refining his highly esteemed dough, and in that period has served pizza to the leading lights of the global scene: from Berlusconi to Bono, Obama to Osama. In 2012, however, Grande was exiled from his beloved Italian homeland on account of what the Italian state deemed 'belligerent sexual deviancy', and was forced to take up residence here in London, home of the open-minded and liberal man. So it is with great excitement that we here at the Queen's Head Brixton can announce the arrival of Italy's culinary prodigal son, Grande Finocchio. Enjoy.

Culinary ambitions aside, the bar's true culture was far from gastro; it was a breeding ground of savage ridicule. The drinkers all had something to prove, although none were sure what that was exactly. On certain nights there were more drug dealers than customers but there was rarely any violence. At least they were contained, and local coppers turned a blind eye to the venue.

Exactly who was allowed to go upstairs after the Queen's gigs was regulated: only 'VIPs' were permitted into the drug den that was locked behind a numbered door code. Word of the number quickly spread, and before long members of the general public would wander in at all hours to gawp at the scene. After one particularly chaotic late-nighter Saul woke up supine, almost snowblind, on the bar's banquette, after passing out three hours earlier. He opened one eye to see his friend Lenin staggering around the bar – he took a half pint glass, filled it with Smirnoff and drank the whole lot in one go before brushing himself down and going off to catch the bus to work. It was 7 a.m.

As the windows had been smashed in twice by the same vendetta-fuelled ex-customer, they were permanently boarded. The Queen's was Tardis-like; those who entered became unaware of time or daylight hours. The upstairs window had been broken when Saul got into a fight with Nathan and Curly Joe, who were playing the Beatles' 'Let it Be' on repeat as the sun came up. Unable to tolerate yet another rendition of McCartney's eight-minute pseudo-religious ballad through the floorboards, Saul politely asked them to turn it off, then returned to the broom cupboard, slamming the door behind him. Five minutes later, Nathan put it on again even louder, singing noisily so that his bandmate would be certain to hear it.

The lights finally went out behind Saul's eyes. Nathan had pushed him too far this time. As he smashed the door open he snatched a cymbal from the drum kit and frisbeed it at Nathan's head, who only narrowly avoided a partial decapitation. Nathan and Curly Joe tried to take Saul to the ground. Nathan pulled Saul up, threw him against the wall and screamed at him, 'Don't fucking push me.' Saul pushed him, and Nathan rammed Saul's head straight through the window, scattering its glass onto the pavement below.

After a few flashes of ultra-violence, the argument was quickly forgotten and the soft warm glow of heroin abuse supplanted the fight. Saul and Nathan taped binbags up against the broken window frame, preventing daylight filtering into their eyes, and embarked on an epic four-day session, locked away together from the world and cocooning themselves in the festering comfort of tinfoil.

I suppose everyone in the band brought a certain amount of disgrace to the table. It is therefore unwise to try to work out whose contribution most lowered the tone. That being said, were I forced to point a finger,

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I would point it at Curly Joe. I've never come across a less professional human being. In a way this is what gave him his appeal. A Neanderthal on bass made perfect sense. It was a strong aesthetic. Rhythm isn't about thought after all, it's about sex. Joe was keen on sex.

It didn't take long for Joe to find himself sacked from the group. The minute we started getting paid for shows, the minute we had a schedule that stretched beyond forty-eight hours into the future, he struggled to keep it together. Even the most basic tasks could prove calamitous should you prescribe Curls to carry them out. In the early evening before one of our shows at the Queen's, during that period when our star was very much at the beginning of its meagre ascent, the Landlord realised the bar was out of limes. Joe piped up. He'd fetch the limes. The Landlord gave him twenty quid and sent him off to market. Discredit where it's due, he made this call despite the fact Joe had given up on wearing shoes by this point in time. He was in the middle of his 'barefoot phase', which to the best of my memory lasted some two or three months. Many a time you would catch him out and about around Brixton, in a liquor stupor, his clothes covered in filth, his feet almost black, having just inspired a brawl.

An hour went by. Then two. Then three. By this point in time the place was heaving. Still no limes. Still no Curls. 'What a fucking cunt,' said the Landlord, over and over again, to nobody, much to our mirth. As showtime approached at the tail-end of the evening, the funny side started to disappear. 'What a fucking cunt,' we said to one another, 'you couldn't pack another body into that room downstairs', so and so's here from such and such a magazine, band, label, etc . . . Not for the first time in his life, Adam had to start working out the bass parts. We began snaking our way through the audience towards the stage without him around midnight, when Curls finally made an appearance in the doorway. He was naked except for a hospital smock.

It turned out that he had managed the purchase after all. He'd picked up a crate in the village market as required, he just hadn't managed to make the four-minute walk back to the pub. He'd taken a detour on the way there to score a load of Xanax. Instead of waiting until after that night's coke binge to swallow these, he'd gotten a head start, and gobbled

a few the minute he got his grubby hands on them. After picking up the Landlord's order he'd bumped into his latest squeeze somewhere on Atlantic Road. Again, being a man of the moment if nothing else, a man of appetite, he decided on yet another detour, this time to the nearest park so he could have a fuck in the bushes. Then he passed out completely. When he came to, he was in hospital. The paramedics had found his unresponsive body in the foliage, surrounded by a hundred stray limes.

'Touch the Leather' was the most notorious of the band's unholy trinity of films made at the Queen's and owed much to an obscure video, 'Chase the Dragon', by the Australian blues band, Beasts of Bourbon. As an homage, a wooden frame was built in the function room with a plastic sheet draped across it, behind which the band planned to dance and make vaguely menacing gestures, just like their idols. After building the set, the entire group embarked on a day-long binge and, consequently, nobody turned up for the actual video shoot on the following day, nobody except for Nathan.

When Lias emerged from his chamber, a small room situated on the second floor above the establishment, he discovered that his errant bandmates were absent without leave. Their plans were quickly rearranged to mimic another of Beast of Bourbon's videos, 'Psycho', instead. Lias decreed that Fat White Family's version would be far more lo-fi and that it should be injected with a degenerate pornographic element.

After knocking back two tequilas, the brothers were prepared for the filming that would be shot by director Roger Sargent in real time, over three minutes, in one take. In close-up, Lias smoked a cigarette and grimaced as he sang in front of a candlelit table. Behind him, Nathan rolled across the floor in slow motion, then, with his trousers pulled fully down, exposed his bare-naked arsehole straight at the lens as he balanced on top of a hardback

flight case. Lias attempted to keep a straight face as he sang in the foreground. As he gyrated up and down, Nathan's ball sack swung between his legs like a Newton's Cradle. Behind them, their friend Lenin, who had been up drinking with the Landlord all night, sat by the piano, playing stabberscotch between gaps in his fingers.

Only days after being uploaded onto YouTube it was removed for indecency, but by then it had caused enough controversy to create the desired effect. When Saul first watched it, he immediately denounced the video as juvenile, and the song rudimentary. But despite Saul's protest, 'Touch the Leather' quickly caught fire online. When the producer Tony Visconti first heard it, he believed it to be the best thing he had heard since Iggy Pop's 'Lust for Life', and was keen to produce their second LP, *Songs for Our Mothers*, before working with David Bowie on his swan-song, *Blackstar*. Not that the offer appealed to Saul. The idea of working with Visconti was quickly dismissed as far too obvious. The same went for former Smiths producer Stephen Street, who was also interested in collaborating. Why would the band want mainstream acclaim? Fame held no allure for Saul, who preferred

the idea of the band producing themselves. He was vehement in his vision to create one of the most doggedly unlistenable records of the coming year, an opinion at odds with that of the band's manager, Stuart Green, who as a hardcore Bowie fan could not see the reasoning in such a decision.

Throughout their tenancy at the Queen's, Brixton was undergoing a period of significant change. Streets that were previously populated with market stalls, Jamaican record shops or fruit and vegetable shops were slowly shutting down over rent increases. What replaced them – chic coffee shops, expensive restaurants and organic food stores – were an indication of the wave of gentrification that would flood Brixton in the years to come.

At the village market's Granville Arcade, where Lias had worked at the Agile Rabbit, a new store opened called 'Champagne + Fromage'. Sensing the injustice towards its previous tenants, the band set up an anonymous gentrification hate page called 'Yuppies Out' on Facebook. It was puerile even by their standards, with Soviet imagery that bled into Islamic iconography plastered on its home page. Their aim was to ridicule the new wave of upwardly mobiles that were making their way onto Brixton's streets, those who were pushing property prices up and local people out. Anthony Gormley's bollards on Bellenden Road took a pounding, as did Saul's dad, whose photograph was doctored with crudely drawn red swastika eyes and posted on the page.

Yuppies Out was littered with explosive acts of MS Paint détournement; anyone or anything the Fat Whites didn't like was fair game. Because the band were social rejects with nothing to lose, they opted for an old school hard left/class war visual approach. Lias's most successful contribution was a scathing two-thousand-word viral essay on the Campari rooftop bar in

Peckham. It was a vicious full-frontal assault on everything he despised about himself, his non-existent future and the world around him that refused to cough it up, through the prism of a bar he wanted to drink at but couldn't afford to.

When a Foxton's estate agency opened in the Brixton area, they took it as a bad omen and immediately switched into riot mode, arranging a street demonstration attended by fifty people in army jackets waving banners outside. Behind the loudhailer was Lias, who wore a Palestinian keffiyeh scarf around his neck. He had previously posted a message online:

> A dark cloud is ominously looming above the once pure skys [sic] of Brixton, this cloud is called CHAMPAGNE AND FROMAGE and from the 15th of October it will rain on us until we drown in a sea of estate agents, champagne swilling yummy mummies and the so called 'fizz fiends' . . . cunts! WE WILL NOT STAND FOR THIS. DEATH TO CHAMPAGNE AND FROMAGE! YUPPIES OUT!

The bar's owner was perplexed by the commotion his new bar had caused – its previous Covent Garden location had been innocuous – but the protesters believed it was symbolic of something bigger: the middle-classes were moving in and ejecting the community who had always lived there. He stared up at the handmade cardboard signs emblazoned with 'TAKE YOUR GRILLED SALMON PANINI AND CHAMPAGNE WITH YOU!' and the small child who held a 'YUPPIES KILL CULTURE' banner and wondered how his empty little bar selling afternoon tea for £29.95 or bottles of Waris-Larmandier Cuvée Empreinte for £110 had caused such a provocation.

Nathan took it upon himself to feed the masses, distributing packets of processed cheese slices stolen from Iceland and a bottle of Frosty Jack's cider served in plastic cups as the rain bucketed down outside. When the *Evening Standard* caught on to the story they believed a serious militant group were behind the action,

having no idea that the political agitators posting images of Stalin online were actually the drug-addled Fat White Family, uploading screenshots live from Saul's mouldering broom cupboard.

Within a matter of months, the band's talent for provocation and relentless troublemaking online resulted in their very first front page, but perhaps not one they had predicted the night before their celebrations began. On 8 April, Saul was stirring on his mattress, attempting to shake off the previous day's crack comedown when he heard excitable voices rising from downstairs.

'She's gone! I can't fucking believe it,' the Landlord shouted.

'Yes!' yelled Lias. 'The greatest news I've heard all year.'

Outside, car horns started beeping. The television was turned on to the BBC at full volume. Nathan tapped on the door lightly and appeared cocooned in a duvet which covered his head and body.

'Saul? You up?' he said, as he poked his head into the darkened pit. 'Guess who's dead?'

'I don't fucking know and I don't care,' Saul replied. 'Told you not to wake me up . . .'

'Alright, misery. But you're going to love this. Thatcher. She's gone. Ding dong!'

Saul rubbed his eyes and broke out into a wide smile.

'A day for celebration.'

'Yeah, too right,' he said. 'Coach is going to love this.'

Up the road, at Windrush Square, revellers had started to gather. Nathan pulled on his trousers before running out of the door to see the commotion. By the time he returned, Saul, Lias and the Landlord were rubbing their hands with glee.

'There's a soundsystem there already,' Nathan said. 'And at least thirty people. They've all got banners.'

On the television screen above them the news rolled with

footage of the former prime minister, leaving Downing Street in tears, missiles exploding in the Falklands War, children drinking miniature bottles of milk, striking miners being chased by marauding police on horseback at Orgreave, newspaper headlines screaming THIS LADY'S NOT FOR TURNING, stockbrokers waving filthy rolls of cash at the camera, and the smoking shell of a cremated Brighton hotel.

'Wait,' Saul muttered. 'I have an idea.'

He scratched at a spotty scab on his face, struck by a bolt of inspiration. He vanished, and a minute later reappeared with his stained bedsheet, grabbed a roll of tape from behind the bar, and gaffered it to the floorboards.

'You got any of that black paint left?' he asked. 'And a brush . . .'

'I'll have a look in the cellar,' the Landlord replied. 'But no spelling mistakes. Make it good.'

By the time they arrived in the centre of Brixton, Thatcher's Death Party was in full throttle. Hundreds gathered outside the Ritzy Cinema, where the joyous crowd had scaled the front of the building and rearranged the billboard letters to spell 'MARGARET THATCHER'S DEAD. LOL. OH, AYE.' A shop window was smashed, and paint was thrown across the fascia of the local Foxton's estate agents. Anti-Thatcher graffiti was scrawled on the walls in red paint howling: 'You snatched my milk! & our hope.' Music boomed out across the square, as revellers sang 'Maggie! Maggie! Maggie! Dead! Dead! Dead!' and politicos congregated from the Anti-Bedroom Tax Federation, the Communist Party and the Socialist Party with members of the Brixton public to mark the occasion.

Dressed in a combat jacket, with a freshly shaved head, Saul's eyes were larger than usual that day. It was noted by Alabama 3's Larry Love that he had started to resemble a crack gopher in his emaciated state; Larry found it hilarious when Saul had recently been admitted to hospital with a constipation-related hernia.

Saul lit up a Marlboro Red and carried the banner along to the

crowd with Nathan, who wore a leather flying jacket and a broad grin. Brixton junkies, crackheads, desolate outpatients of the Maudsley and anarchist gutter-dwellers joined their celebration; one had served time for setting fire to an empty scab bus used by miners in the 1980s and was particularly overjoyed at the passing of the dreaded Milk Snatcher. The rapidly accumulating rabble would not be outdone by the 'Rejoice Thatcher is Dead' flag that was attracting attention from a pack of swarming photographers.

'It's our chance to shine!' Saul shouted, as he unfurled the first of two banners he had handmade for the special moment.

His gut feeling was correct. When he held it up towards the sky all cameras fell on him and Nathan. A journalist gravitated towards Saul, sticking a microphone beneath his mouth, to which he gladly gave a quote.

'We are here for a celebration,' he said. 'I have never seen such a joyous atmosphere for someone's death. She was so particularly evil and hated by everyone; there are twelve-year-olds here . . . I wasn't even alive to witness most of her reign, but people are here because of the effects of it. It is the celebration of the end of a tyrant. And Brixton is the right place to do it.'

By midnight riot squad officers had been deployed as missiles exploded and crashed in the same location as the 1981 riots that Thatcher had provoked. Lias and Saul smoked crack to mark the occasion. As Lias pulled the pipe away, reeling from the intense rush rising through his lungs and into his face, he puckered his mouth and exhaled the smoke. Within a heartbeat Saul, who had already finished his portion, snatched it from his hands and ran off into the corner of the room, hunched over like an evil maniac in a miracle posture as Lias tried to wrestle the pipe from him.

'You little prick! So much for socialism,' he said.

'Socialism . . .' Saul replied, blowing the last of the gear from his mouth as he booted Lias away. 'Fuck your socialism!'

Despite the wave of protests across the country, it was not their brand of public outrage that generated the most headlines the

following morning. It was the defining image of three emaciated reprobates standing on the balcony of the Queen's, in front of a handmade banner taped to the wall reading: 'THE WITCH IS DEAD'.

It was the first and possibly only time the Fat White Family would ever make the front cover of a national newspaper, but it was a moment they would treasure for the rest of their lives.

'We've finally made it, brothers!' Saul proclaimed when he saw the photograph plastered across the *Independent* the following day. He tore the image out and sellotaped it behind the counter at the Queen's.

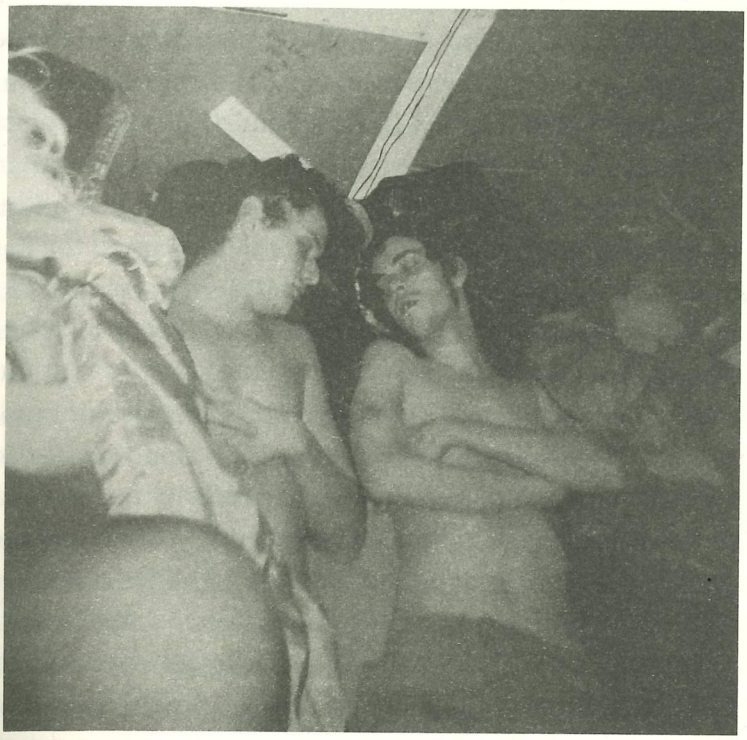
'This is *my* greatest moment,' he said.

A Type One Situation

The band had been formed out of sheer spite. Spite unto the world that rejected me and my companions on account of our obvious defects. Our being drug-addled, socially crippled, mentally ill reprobates wasn't posturing. It was like a club for useless, angry young men driven to breaking point by the job office. We pooled our collective sense of embittered enfeeblement, our childhood traumas, our flaccid rage, turning them into a kind of public exorcism, one that eventually became too vulgar for people to ignore. 'Success!' we thought, not realising the implications of having to actually live in that moment, every night, seemingly forever. We were going to see the world, or at least its backstage rooms. We'd never have to pay for a drink again, and large crowds of strangers would applaud us each night on account of the very things for which we were once shunned.

Stuart, the manager of Fat Whites, assumed control of the band's peripatetic existence by creating a plan that would see them acquire a record deal, a chain of gigs in the UK, a sold-out show at the 100 Club and, later, Brixton Academy. It was not beyond the realm of possibility to make this a reality, but it required a launchpad. They were booked to play at South by Southwest music festival in Austin, Texas.

The first indication of their American journey was made public at that year's NME Awards at Brixton Academy. The once-



It was the Landlord's birthday, and the pub was heaving with punters. Palestine flags hung from the walls and pamphlets were scattered on each table. During the gig, Nathan took his shirt off and whipped it across Dan's back. Its button caught him in the face, in the same eye on which Dan had had a serious operation as a teenager for a detached retina.

'You fucking arsehole!' Dan screamed from behind the drum kit, before standing up, kicking over his drum stool, then grabbing hold of Nathan's keyboard and throwing it onto the floor, mid-set. The gig continued at pace.

Nathan stood back grinning at him, before picking it up, plugging it back in, and making a throat-cutting gesture across his neck.

band lived off cereal and Pop Tarts. In New Paltz, it was so cold they fought like starving dogs over the plug-in radiator.

'Come on, Saul,' Lias shouted as he walked through the door. 'Only thirty minutes left before we have to finish.'

'Fuck off, I'm staying in bed.'

'We're doing "Tinfoil Deathstar". It'll sound like dogshit if you don't get out of bed.'

Saul fell silent and pulled the duvet over his head.

'Don't feel well.'

At 5.23 p.m. Saul charged into the studio, immaculately dressed, and picked up his guitar just as Liam was packing up for the day.

'I'm ready to go now,' he said, before nailing the track in a single take.

'Tinfoil Deathstar' was based on the veteran David Clapson, who had his benefits cut after missing one appointment at the dole office. Police found his body in his flat. He had diabetes and couldn't afford to keep his fridge on to cool his insulin. He was found next to a stack of CVs with £3.44 to his name. The autopsy revealed he had no food in his stomach when he died. Clapson had worked his whole life and only started claiming dole so he could look after his mother.

Set at a south London party, with hipsters sitting around smoking heroin and thinking they have problems, they are then visited by David Clapson's ghost knocking at the window, holding CVs in his hand. The song was a morality tale of sorts, reminiscent of the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. When Lias read about the story in London he had been enraged, but the cynical part of his nature had sensed an opportune moment for a decent lyric.

After recording the vocal, over the next few days Lias was gripped by a blazing fever and spent forty-eight hours sweating out flu on an old mattress at the back of the former slaughterhouse. The air drank his body dry, and pools of salty sweat